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SUMMARY

of the

REPORT OF THE IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION

of

CANADA

(The full text of the report (in English only) is contained in document FCCC/IDR.1/CAN)

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I. Summary[1/]

1. The in-depth review was carried out during the period April to August 1995 and included a visit by the team from 29 May to 2 June 1995. The team included experts from Mexico, the Czech Republic, Japan and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Canada submitted its National Report on Climate Change in February 1994, and the National Action Program on Climate Change (NAPCC) in March 1995, and additional background material was made available to the team.

2. The team recognized Canada's important role internationally in exploring formats and contents of such reports prior to the adoption of guidelines. It found that the communication and updates/supplements in general respected the guidelines. The measures described in the national report provide examples of activities under way in Canada, including federal, provincial, municipal and private sector initiatives, rather than a fully comprehensive description. During the visit specific information was given on emissions of non-CO_2 gases and sinks. Limited information was communicated on the effects of measures.

3. Important factors influencing Canada's high intensity of energy use per capita (8 tons of oil equivalent in 1990 compared to an average of 4.8 in OECD member countries) and high emissions of CO_2 (17 tons CO_2 per person in 1990 compared to an OECD average of 12) are its size, settlement patterns and cold climate, major indigenous energy reserves, major and growing energy-intensive industry, relatively low energy prices and an export-oriented economy. Furthermore, the population growth rate of up to 1.5 per cent per annum is the highest among OECD member countries and is an important factor behind historical and expected growth in the economy and of emissions. Emissions vary considerably among the provinces and territories due to differences in the use of hydro, thermal and nuclear power, settlement patterns, industrial and resource bases. Canada is heavily dependent on energy-intensive exports. Its economy is based on an integrated North American market. Some policies and measures, such as energy efficiency, are aimed at North American harmonization.

4. Jurisdiction over policies and measures is shared at federal, provincial and municipal levels, and practices vary amongst provinces. Consequently, federal policy is developed through consultations between the various levels of government, and other stakeholders (business and environmental non-governmental organizations) are also closely involved. Canada provided information on both federal programmes and actions at the provincial level, but the information was not meant to be exhaustive for the latter. Canada's mitigation measures include regulatory and information programmes and other new initiatives, but also have a large voluntary component. The federal Government is taking a consensus-building approach. Efforts to bring all stakeholders on board are beginning to bear fruit, and the

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1/ In accordance with decision 2/CP.1, the full draft of this report was communicated to the Canadian Government, which had no further comments.

NAPCC of 1995 established a common platform from which Canada's response to climate change can be developed further. The team found that this highly consultative process appeared essential for identifying responsibilities and options for detailed action.

5. The 1995 NAPCC included a new initiative called the Climate Change Voluntary Challenge and Registry Program (VCR). This was at the signatory stage at the time of the team's visit, and can be seen as an outreach programme establishing a common platform for the voluntary approach. Activities under existing programmes could be reported under the VCR. The team also noted that the Canadian federal Government is no longer financially supporting new "megaprojects" in the energy sector.

6. Canada has committed itself to stabilizing net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at 1990 levels by 2000. However, the revised outlook referred to in the NAPCC, which includes existing measures, projects a 13 per cent growth in GHG emissions from 1990 to 2000 unless there are new initiatives including those in the NAPCC such as the Voluntary Challenge and Registry Program. The team found the assumptions underlying the projections reasonable, although the assumed growth of emissions of gases other than CO_2 may be high compared to international trends for these gases. There is now a broad consensus among governments that in order to close the stabilization gap further options need to be developed. A multi-stakeholder group has been analysing further measures. Canada is investigating the economic, social and environmental effects of measures undertaken to mitigate GHG emissions, and also how performance indicators could be used to assess progress in this field. Progress in achieving the target will be reviewed domestically in December 1996. The team concluded that, if the Government at that time finds that Canada is unlikely to reach its target without more aggressive action, there will be limited time to implement and see the full effects of new initiatives by 2000, even if the NAPCC is seen as a flexible instrument allowing for prompt action.

7. Forty-five per cent of Canada is covered by forest. While the contribution of this sector, especially with regard to anthropogenic influence, is still highly uncertain, it seems that it shifted from being a large net sink to becoming a lesser net source of emissions around 1990. Pests and forest fires are contributors to loss of carbon from this reservoir. Recognizing that most of the forest area is believed to be unaffected by human interference, the team still concluded that development of net anthropogenic emissions or sequestration from this sector could be significant inside a net approach. Thus, Canada's ongoing efforts to build an adequate inventory will be crucial to develop and monitor relevant mitigation and adaptation strategies.

8. Canada is contributing its full share to the 1994-1996 replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and was also a contributor in the pilot phase. The official development assistance (ODA) level in 1993 was 0.45 per cent of the gross national product (GNP), according to OECD statistics. Approximately 80 per cent of ODA is managed by the Canadian International Development Agency and mostly disbursed through bilateral development projects. All Canadian ODA projects are subject to the Canadian

Environmental Assessment Act, requiring assessment, and, where appropriate, mitigation of the environmental impacts.

9. The team found that Canada is making a considerable contribution to the scientific understanding of climate change. Given the variety of climatic conditions within its frontiers, research on vulnerability and effects is particularly important in an international context. Canada has not implemented specific adaptation measures as such, although some areas are considered sensitive to shifts in extreme events, sealevel rise, precipitation patterns and temperature changes.

10. The wide involvement of stakeholders in developing Canada's response to climate change is crucial to public awareness of the issue. There are also examples of information materials and education programmes that are noteworthy, although it was recognized that education and public awareness efforts need to be coordinated. Activities in that respect will be achieved through the efforts of the education work group of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment and the communications/public education work group of the National Air Issues Coordinating Committees.

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